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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography of 39 books is designed to tap the rich resource of children's literature to stimulate discussion of violence and of alternative, peaceful ways to resolve conflict. The most important criterion for selection was that issues of violent and nonviolent conflict resolution are presented so that students can examine the following general questions: (1) What is conflict? (2) What is violence? (3) What are some of the causes of violence? (4) What are some consequences of violence? (5) What alternatives to violence can be used when conflicts need to be settled? (6) How can we prevent violence? The second criterion applied in selecting these books was that they model the qualities of "good" literature: the author should use language beautifully, develop sensitive, believable characterizations, and use involving, well-crafted plots. Another criterion for selection was that the bibliography should reflect diverse cultural experiences. The intent is to enlighten readers to various cultural perspectives on causes of conflict and ways it can be handled to prevent escalation. The bibliography also includes depictions of females and males in a variety of situations and roles, in order to counteract sex-role stereotypes that can lead to less understanding and concern about violence against women. (LH)

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LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS: EXAMINING ISSUES OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

an annotated bibliography

ED 403 196

by **ALITA ZURAV LETWIN**
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SO 026 797

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LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

EXAMINING ISSUES OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

by Alita Zurav Letwin

This annotated bibliography is designed to tap the rich resource of children's literature to stimulate discussion of violence and of alternative, peaceful ways to resolve conflict. Its focus is on books appropriate for upper elementary and middle school students, though a number of books can be used in the early elementary grades as well.

These books are chosen with a number of criteria in mind. The most important is that issues of violent and nonviolent conflict resolution are clearly presented so that students can examine the following general questions:

- What is conflict?
- What is violence?
- What are some causes of violence?
- What are some consequences of violence?
- What alternatives to violence can be used when conflicts need to be settled?
- How can we prevent violence?

Literature is particularly helpful in discussing such issues, not only by describing conflicts, but also by indicating why the conflict occurred and what followed in its aftermath. A novel or short story might show the anger that led to violence, and the fear, unhappiness, hurt, and despair that violence can leave in its wake. Because literature is often dramatic, it can strike an emotional chord that holds student interest while it broadens perspective and heightens awareness of one's own and other's feelings and beliefs.

Using literature for this purpose can, in turn, awaken an interest in literature itself. Therefore the second criterion used in choosing these books is that they model the qualities of "good" literature: the author should use language beautifully, develop sensitive, believable characterizations and use involving, well-crafted plots. There are many books that are written for young people that raise the issues of this bibliography; there are few that have literary value as well. Not all the books included here achieve the same literary heights, but none are mediocre.

Another criterion for selection was that, the bibliography should reflect diverse cultural experiences. All readers could then be enlightened by, and sensitized to, cultural perspectives on causes of conflict and ways it can be handled to avoid escalation. With violence erupting worldwide, often caused by ethnic, religious, and racial animosity this criterion takes on new urgency. The bibliography also includes depictions of females and males in a variety of situations and roles, in order to counteract sex-role stereotypes that can lead to less understanding and concern about violence against women: in their homes, on our streets, or as a conscious act of war.

The bibliography reflects the wide variety of situations in which conflict resolution and/or violence becomes an issue. It includes themes of interpersonal, family, school, community, national, and international relations in both contemporary and historic settings. It also allows students to examine high profile issues, such as gangs, war, substance abuse, and ways of creating social change.

CLASSROOM USE

The criteria listed above may be exhausting, but the bibliography is not *exhaustive.* It is meant to present **examples** of what is available and how, with appropriate teacher guidance, literature can be used to shed light on these topics. For this reason the selections include some **examples** of discussion questions or topics. These kinds of questions, adapted to meet the needs of your classroom, could be used to link a particular book to the six general questions listed in this introduction.

Involving classroom activities are essential in helping students learn the analytic, policy making, evaluative, and participatory skills young people need to help solve this and other societal problems. In some few instances suggestions for such activities are included but in the main they are left to the discretion of the teacher.

The books are not given a particular grade assignment. Picture books, usually seen as primary grade material, are suggested for use at all grade levels. Teachers have often indicated that they use select picture books through all grade levels because they are often sophisticated in concept, poetic in language and beautifully illustrated. They are also brief, allowing for a quick yet involving, introduction to the subject.

The other books listed, unless otherwise noted, also can be used across the upper elementary and middle school grades. They have high interest subject matter and are sophisticated enough for teachers or students to chose among them based on individual reading skills or the length of time available for a reading assignment. While these books were gathered to help examine a difficult issue, they are also meant to be enjoyed by you as well as your students. We hope you receive as much pleasure from them as we believe your students will.

Note: Many of these books were suggested by colleagues and friends involved in civic and law-related education around the country. Some were culled from general lists of books recommended for use in the social studies; others from books representing outstanding literature. Vida Rose Scully and the other staff members of Children's Book World in West Los Angeles were exceptionally generous with their help and suggestions.

We are sure that some of your favorite books have been left off this list. Please do send us their titles for a future up-date.

The Butter Battle Book. Dr. Seuss

Random House (1984). ISBN 0-394-86580-4. Picture book, 42 pp.

The Yooks and the Zooks live in neighboring communities divided by a wall and by a custom. The Yooks eat their bread with the butter side up and the Zooks eat their bread with the butter side down! This difference causes dislike, distrust, and finally hatred. The Yooks and the Zooks find themselves engaged in an arms race with ever increasing sophisticated weaponry. With classic simplicity and wonderfully creative language, characters, and illustrations, Dr. Seuss explains how small differences can grow into larger disagreements that, in turn, can escalate into potential destruction. (Students might be encouraged to write an ending to the story so that such destruction is avoided.) This book makes its point clearly for all ages, and all ages will respond to its message and its cleverness.

- Why are some people frightened of others who do some things differently?
- What are some situations in your own lives, in your school, in your community, in our nation and in the world that raise the same issues as this book?
- What are some ways to avoid violence and resolve the conflict in these situations?

Smokey Night. Eve Bunting, illustrated by David Diaz

Harcourt Brace and Company (1994) A Caldecott Medal winner.
ISBN 0-15-269954-6. Picture book, 30 pp.

This is a very sensitive story of how people of different backgrounds, who have felt hostility towards each other, can be brought together through common misfortune. It is set against the fires and looting, the anger and excitement, the danger and the fright of the Los Angeles riots in 1992. The final message is one of tentative hope for bridging the gap—if enough effort is made. In a few words, the book seems to take a strong position against destructive and illegal behavior without ignoring the reasons for the anger that lies beneath it. The illustrations are true works of art, powerful, yet not overwhelming. This is a moving story, made less intimidating by concern for two missing cats. In follow-up discussion and activities students could be asked to answer the questions that follow and perhaps to write a story that shows what should happen in the days following the events in the story.

- How would you describe the "message" of the story?
- What other examples of riotous behavior in history can you identify?
- What might be some reasons that groups of people riot?
- What do you think are the effects of such behavior on individuals and on the whole community, including the characters in the story?
- What might be some ways to solve the problems resulting from the riots?
- What are some ways to avoid such violence in the future?

The Big Book for Peace. Durell and Sachs, editors
Dutton Children's Books (1990). ISBN O-525-44605-2. 116 pp.

A compilation of short stories, (fictitious and true), pictures, poems and songs by over 30 well-known children's book authors and illustrators. The book addresses the many kinds of peace needed in today's world, as described on its dust jacket: "Peace among people living in different lands—but also among next-door neighbors. Harmony among people of different races—and among sisters and brothers. Understanding among those separated by their beliefs—and those separated by generations." The book stresses the give and take of friendship, the avoidance of misunderstandings between individuals and groups, and peaceful avenues to bring about social change. It has a pacifist, nonviolent-resistance bent. Its short format and great variety allows for discussion of many of the issues mentioned in the introduction to this bibliography, as well as some more difficult ones, including the following:

- How does our country or community handle conflicts in society?
- What are ways that countries can solve disputes without resorting to violence?
- How can individuals or nations defend themselves from aggression?
- Is the use of violence ever justified?

The Gold Coin. Alma Flor Ada
Atheneum (1991). ISBN-689-31633-X. Picture book, 28 pp.

This story of human transformation is set in rural Central America. Juan, a thief of many years, spends a fateful week tracking down the owner of a gold coin he covets. The coin owner goes from farm to farm healing the sick. At first Juan is destructive in his anger and concerned only with his goal of theft. But he is forced to help others when he tries to get them to lead him to the healer. By the end of his quest he has become a changed, caring person. The link between "caring" and avoidance of violent means for achieving one's aims could be explored through the following questions:

- What do you think the message of this book is?
- Does violence include damage to property?
- Do you think that Juan would be as violent at the end of the story as he was at the beginning? Why might he have changed?
- What meaning does this story have for us in our school or in our community?

Mrs. Moscowitz's Last Stand. Arthur A. Levine

Tambourine Books (1993). ISBN 0-688-10753-2. Picture book, 30 pp.

Mrs. Moscowitz has seen many changes in her neighborhood. They all required learning about new cultures and establishing new friendships. These friendships blossomed under the ginko tree in front of her house. Now the tree is threatened by a city order to cut it down. First Mrs. Moscowitz and her friends use their wiles to foil the city's plans. But when all else fails, she resorts to civil disobedience by chaining herself to the tree. The resultant publicity works. The tree is saved and the neighborhood celebrates. This deceptively simple story is as rich as its multicultural setting.

- What conflict needs to be resolved in this story?
- Explain the reasons for saving the tree. Explain the reasons for cutting the tree down. Which position do you support? Why?
- What are some other ways to resolve the conflict?
- Would these ways work with problems in your community? Give an example.

Pink and Say. Patricia Polacco

Philomel Books (1994). ISBN 0-399-22671-0. Advanced picture book, 52 pp.

"Mother, this war has to be won or this sickness that has taken this land will never stop." The "sickness" was slavery and two 15 year-olds, one black, one white, were caught in the middle of a war to end it. Both are Union soldiers, separated from their units, running from the Confederate army. This powerful "picture book" is for older children, those who can begin to understand the cruelty of this civil war as well as the strong bonds that were forged amid the horror. It raises the question of conflict between states around a policy that created a great moral dilemma. Yet it does so in the context of the lives of three people who become "family" through their common dedication and human concern.

- What examples of violence are found in this story?
- What options were open to the characters? Explain why they may have behaved the way they did? What might you have done in their places?
- How might this conflict have been avoided?
- What are some similar situations in the world today? What are some ways of resolving the conflict(s) without resorting to violence?

The Coming of Surfman. Peter Collington

Knopf (1993). ISBN 0-679-87421-9. Advanced picture book, 31 pp.

Set in England, this story is about a man who tries to bridge the chasm between two teenage gangs. Dubbed the "Surfman," he builds a huge wave machine in an old factory and the gangs declare a truce so that they can take turns using it. The wave machine changes everyone's life while it is operable. But once it breaks down, so does the truce, and the neighborhood again lives with hostility and violence. Things could have been different and the author indicates what might have helped create a different ending.

- What do you think the author's ideas are about the cause of conflict in this community? Do you agree with him?
- Who do you think was responsible for the recurrence of the violence?
- What could have been done to avoid it? What could be done once it happened?
- What are some similar situations in our community? What could be done to avoid violence here?

Luka's Quilt. Georia Guback

Greenwillow (1994). ISBN 0-688-12154-3. Picture book, 30 pp.

"Today is Lei Day.... Let's declare a truce and see what's going on at the park." Luka and her grandmother need a truce because of their deep disagreement over what Luka's traditional Hawaiian quilt should look like. The warm relationship they shared is disrupted by their disappointment in each other's reactions to differences of opinion. But the truce helps them work it out. They come to appreciate their different perspectives and value each other's vision. A short, warm story that emphasizes the need for tolerance.

- Describe how Luka and her "tutu" felt in the story. Why did they feel that way?
- How did they solve their conflict?
- Describe a similar situation in your own life, or in your community?

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. Verna Aardema
Dial Books (1975). A Caldecott Medal winner.
ISBN 0-8037-6088-4. Picture book, 27 pp.

A "little lie" becomes a rumor that leads to panic, which results in accidental death and has shattering consequences for the whole earth. The animals in this jungle parable are called to a meeting, where each has a turn to explain his or her actions. By the end, it becomes clear that no one meant harm, and further violence is averted because the animals have the opportunity to hear different perspectives. But the mosquito who began the whole chain of events, hides from the meeting and never presents his case. His guilty conscience leads to his own punishment.

- Was there violence in this story?
- What was its cause?
- How did the situation get resolved?
- Why did the mosquito stay away from the meeting?
- What are some situations where rumor leads to conflict?
- Would a meeting like the one in the story help avoid violence?

I Have a Dream, Writings and Speeches That Changed the World.
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Harper Collins (1992). ISBN 0-06-250552-1. 203 pp.

For each of the selections that make up this book, James M. Washington, the editor of this collection, describes what was happening in the civil rights movement, and what issues Reverend King was trying to address. The readings that are particularly useful for a discussion of violence and its alternatives are those that examine the concept of nonviolent resistance. The relatively short selections clearly present both the theory of nonviolence and its practical application in real life. They don't gloss over the problems, but they strongly support the strengths of this approach.

- What are the major ideas about nonviolence that Dr. King presented in these readings?
- What examples did he provide for how nonviolence was used in the past or could be used in the present?
- What arguments did people who disagreed with Dr. King's approach present?
- What do you think about this theory?

Cesar Chavez, Hope for the People. David Goodman
Fawcett Columbine (1991). ISBN 0-449-90626-4.
Bilingual Edition in English and Spanish. 235 pp.

"I am convinced that the truest act of courage...is to struggle for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice." These words of Cesar Chavez, leader of the United Farm Workers, stemmed from the same philosophy of Gandhi as those of Martin Luther King, Jr., his contemporary. How he used this approach in his lifelong struggle for the rights of migrant farm workers is told in this account of a movement to bring change. The book does not take a simple, laudatory approach. It discusses the conflicts within the movement and criticisms of Chavez while presenting the complexity and difficulty of organizing people. The left pages are written in Spanish, the right, in English.

- How did Cesar Chavez use the theory of nonviolent struggle?
- How well did it work?
- Would it work now in our society or in worldwide conflict? Why or why not?

Rosa Parks, My Story. Rosa Parks
Dial Books (1992). ISBN 0-8037-0673-1. 188 pp.

This book is a good match with those on Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez discussed above. In this account of her life before and after her famous refusal to give up her bus seat to a white passenger, Ms. Parks discusses how she came to her courageous act, and the ideas that influenced her decision.

- What does this story have to do with conflict?
- How did Rosa Park's actions reflect her beliefs?
- If you were writing a letter to Ms. Parks, what would you tell her?

The Picture Book of Rosa Parks. David Adler
Holiday House (1993). ISBN 08234-1177-X. Advanced picture book, 30 pp.

Pair this book with *Rosa Parks, My Story,* described above. It gives a simple, yet gripping, account of Rosa Parks's early life in the South and describes what was happening in the growing drive for civil rights just prior to the bus boycott in Montgomery.

- What kind of experiences did Rosa Parks have growing up that might have influenced her actions?
- How do you think different people in the community felt about what she did?

Scorpions. Walter Dean Myers

Harper Collins (1988). A Newbery Honor book. ISBN 0-06-447066-0. 216 pp.

Jamal is a twelve-year-old in New York City, caught in a web of loyalties: first to his family, including a hard-working mother, a brother in jail for drug dealing and a younger sister; then to his brother's gang, the Scorpions, who thrust leadership upon him; to his best friend Tito who pleads with him not to get involved; and finally to his own artistic talent and intelligence. Then there is the subtle pull of the power of a gun. This is a very well-written story is filled with dialogue that rings true. It manages to sensitize the reader to the pressures of urban, poor existence while showing choices that an individual has the responsibility to make. This book is an excellent match with the one that follows.

- What were some of the choices that Jamal had to make?
- Which of these choices could lead to conflict or violence?
- Do you think Jamal made the right decisions? Why?
- What would you have done in Jamal's place?
- What were some things other people could have done to help Jamal?

The Outsiders. S. E. Hinton

Laurel-Leaf Books (1967). ISBN 0-440-96769-4. 156 pp.

Ponyboy is fourteen, tough-acting yet interested in reading and movies. Since his parents' death, he has lived with his two brothers and lived for his gang. While not the roughest group in town, the members of the gang pride themselves on being tough, fighting, long-haired boys from the "wrong side of the tracks." When a rival gang member is killed by Ponyboy's best friend, the violence escalates, to engulf him as well. As in *Scorpions* described above, violence leads to death, to despair, to choices, and to a glimmer of hope through growing self-awareness.

- What were some of the choices that Ponyboy had to make?
- Why did the conflict escalate into violence?
- What would you have done in Ponyboy's place?
- What were some things other people could have done to help Ponyboy?

Words by Heart. Ouida Sebestyen
Bantam Books (1979). ISBN 0-553-25900-8. 134 pp.

This gem of a small book raises the difficult question of how individuals should respond to unprovoked violence against themselves or their loved ones. Should they seek personal or societal revenge? Demand retribution? Forgive? Understand the perpetrators? Even come to their aid? This is a story of 12 year-old Lena, a member of a family of African American tenant farmers in a small white Texas community in 1910. It is complex in its treatment of racism, poverty, dignity and internal fortitude, with unexpected insights into human strengths and weaknesses. It is a tragic story that embodies hope. It takes much of the philosophy of the leaders of nonviolent social movements and relates it to daily life and individual interactions. The Catholic Library World said: "Everything is present here to make this a book not only to be read once, but to be re-read, studied and shared." A perfect choice for this bibliography, beautifully written.

- What were some examples of conflict and violence in this story and why did they happen?
- What differences were there between Lena and her father about how to respond to conflict?
- Would you have acted like Lena did toward the person who committed violence against her family? Why?

The Girl on the Outside. Mildred Pitts Walter
Scholastic (1982). ISBN 0-590-46091-9. 147 pp.

A fictionalized account of a true incident that occurred during the attempt to desegregate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. The story is told through the eyes of both an African American student and a white student. Though they are on different sides of the question, they act heroically when violence is threatened. Their ideas, fears, aspirations and concerns are grippingly conveyed. A good match with *Words by Heart*, above.

- What are some ideas and feelings the two girls have in common in this story? What are some of their differences?
- Did either girl react to the threat of violence in a way that surprised you? Why?
- What would you have done in their situation?
- What are some similarities or differences between the situation in Little Rock in 1957 and your community today?

The Fighting Ground. Avi

Harper and Row (1984). Large Type, 157 pp., ISBN 0-06-440185-5. 152 pp.

Against his father's wishes, 13 year-old Jonathan goes off to fight in the American Revolutionary War. This book covers the next 24 hours and provides an intimate portrait of what war can really be like. There is no glory here, but killing of friend and enemy; combatant and civilian. Written with much dialogue and drama, this book lends itself to dramatization, or "Reading Theater" format. It also raises an interesting question—how does a nation gain its independence when those that rule it want to maintain their control?

- ➤ What do you think the author was trying to say about war in this book? Do you agree or disagree?
- ➤ What would you have done in Jonathan's place?
- ➤ How can a country gain independence or freedom if it is not willing to fight to get it?

The Great Peace March. Holly Near

Henry Holt (1993). ISBN 0-8050-1941-3. Simple picture book, 30 pp.

The words for this picture book come from a song written for the 1986 Great Peace March for Nuclear Disarmament. The march took its participants across the United States in the belief that "Peace can start with just one heart, From a small step to leaps and bounds." The book is dramatically illustrated and has a short note on the background of the march, and why marches have been used around the world to help people "say what you think and to act consistently with your beliefs." Students might be asked to write a song or poem that expresses their feelings about violence. Available from Hereford Music, P.O. Box 236, Ukiah, CA 95482.

- ➤ What solution does this story present to the threat of violence?
- ➤ What do the words "Peace can start with just one heart, From a small step to leaps and bounds" mean?
- ➤ Do you agree with the message of this book? Why? Why not?

Crews: Gang Members Talk to Maria Hinojosa. Maria Hinojosa
Harcourt Brace and Co. (1995). ISBN 0-15-200-2839. 168 pp.

"I kept asking myself—what makes it so easy for a kid to rely on violence? Who sits down and talks to these kids? Who asks what they feel and why? Who wants to listen, no matter how painful the answer might be?" Hinijosa does ask and does listen. And while she may not agree with the answers given to these questions, she sees the humanity of the young people, and looks for ways to reach them. A sensitizing book, one that could help create empathy and a willingness to look for solutions to the problems of violence.

- ➤ Do you think that the interviews reported in this book served a purpose in understanding conflict and violence prevention?
- ➤ What lessons can be drawn from these conversations?
- ➤ Would the answers given by the gang members be similar to ones you would hear in your community?

The Secret of the Peaceful Warrior. Dan Millman
H.J. Kramer (1991). ISBN 091-5811-23-5. Advanced picture book, 30 pp.

A nine year-old boy moves to a new neighborhood where he is confronted by the neighborhood bully. He is helped to deal with his fear and anger by a grandfather named Socrates, who stresses that one's goal should not be to run away, or to fight, but to become a "peaceful warrior." Socrates teaches him martial arts and slowly builds his self-confidence. In the process the boy learns to see past the bully's aggression to his loneliness; he learns to reach out and ends up making a new friend. Mystical in spots, and perhaps a bit simplistic, the book still serves as a good springboard to discussing the ever present dilemma of dealing with a bully without becoming a bully oneself.

- ➤ What is meant by the phrase "peaceful warrior"? Is it possible to be one?
- ➤ Do you think someone can stand up to a bully without becoming a bully oneself?
- ➤ What do you think is the main message of this book? How useful is this message to you in your day to day life?

Swimmy. Leo Lionni

Knopf (1963) A Caldecott Honor Book, ISBN 0-394-82620-5. Simple picture book, 28 pp.

Swimmy is the only survivor of a school of small fish swallowed by a large tuna. He is enchanted by the undersea world that he discovers as he seeks another school to join. He is dismayed to see how the fear of being eaten keeps the other small fish from exploring their world. His solution is to train the small fish to swim as one "like the biggest fish in the sea." This classic picture book tells, in a few words, how the weaker can gain strength by joining together. Uniting for protection could be viewed as one way to deal with the threat of violence. It is also often given as a reason for having gangs. It would be interesting to explore these ideas in follow-up discussions.

- ➤ What do you think of Swimmy's solution?
- ➤ What does this story have to do with conflict or violence in the world?
- ➤ Is Swimmy's idea that if the weak join together they can have protection from the strong similar to the reason that people give for joining gangs? Are there any differences?

I Dream of Peace, Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia.

Introduction by James P. Grant, Executive Director, UNICEF

Harper Collins (1994) ISBN 0- 06-2511 28-9. 78 pp.

Pictures and short writings by children, ages 6 to 1 5, were gathered by UNICEF from refugee camps and schools. What is amazing is how the book manages to be a testimony to suffering, while still emphasizing hope. It serves as "a protest against the violation of [children's] fundamental right to be free of the torments of war," and calls for the people of the world to join with the children in saying "enough is enough." Extremely powerful, yet appropriate for upper elementary and middle school grades. The book raises the question of what individuals, groups, and other nations might do to respond to the children's plea for help.

- ➤ What do the children in this book seem to be saying to the rest of the world?
- ➤ What are other examples of situations where children are caught in violence they had no part in creating?
- ➤ What can we do to prevent or stop such violence? To help the victims of it?

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes. Eleanor Coerr

Dell Publishing (1977) ISBN 0-440-47465-5. 64 pp.

Also a half hour film, told by Liv Ullman. Available on video cassette and 16mm film for purchase or rental. The Sadako Film Project, P.O. Box 67 Santa Cruz, CA 95063

In real life, 12 year-old Sadako became a heroine to children in Japan and throughout the world for her spirited fight against leukemia caused by atomic radiation after the bombing of Hiroshima. This story emphasizes her spirit and courage as she tried to fold a thousand origami cranes in the belief that this would bring her health. When Sadako died before she could finish the task, the children in her class finished it for her. Making origami cranes has become an annual ritual throughout Japan and internationally, in order to remember the human cost of war and to stress the need for peace. This story would pair well with the UNICEF book above.

- ➤ What do you think is the main message of this story?
- ➤ What are other examples of situations where children are caught in violence they had no part in creating?
- ➤ What can we do to prevent or stop such violence? To help the victims of it?

The Diary of a Young Girl. Anne Frank

Pocket Book Classic (1952). ISBN 0-671-69009-4. 258 pp.

This remarkable work by a young teen-age Jewish girl, written while hiding in an Amsterdam loft from the occupying Nazi army, has had a dramatic impact since its first printing. The fact that we know that she died in a concentration camp makes this beautifully written, optimistic, and humanist work even more emotionally stirring. The Holocaust of World War II, as well as the millions of deaths caused by wars since then, provides the most compelling reason for enlisting students in solving the problem of violence. Three companion books that deal with the Holocaust follow.

- ➤ Who were the victims of violence in this story? Why were they victims?
- ➤ Why do you think some people risked their lives to help people being persecuted?
- ➤ What are some ways that such acts of violence could have been prevented? Could be prevented in the future?

A Picture Book of Anne Frank. David Adler

Holiday House (1993). ISBN 0-8234-2078-1. Advanced picture book, 30 pp.

This book provides the background and setting for Anne Frank's diary in a clear, simple, accurate manner. It's factual information helps the students understand why Anne was hiding, and what happened to her and millions, like her, once her family was captured. The book notes that while six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, an equal number of members of other groups met the same fate in Nazi concentration camps.

- ➤ What information did you learn from this book that was not in Ann Franks diary?
- ➤ How does this additional information help answer the questions you discussed after reading the diary?
- ➤ What messages do these books have for people living today?

Number the Stars. Lois Lowry

Dell Publishing (1989). ISBN 0-4400-40327-8. 137 pp.

The Danish people showed remarkable courage and compassion when they helped save their Jewish citizens from extermination. They did so by spiriting them out of the country to the safety of Sweden. This gripping and wonderfully told story is about one family's participation in this effort. The author quotes a young man killed in the Resistance who calls on Danes not to return to the times before the war, but to "...create an ideal of human decency, and not a narrow-minded and prejudiced one." This book reflects that dream.

- ➤ Why do you think the Danish people reacted to the threat to their Jewish citizens in this way?
- ➤ What are some examples in our own country of similar actions?
- ➤ What lessons are there in this story for people who want to help prevent violence?

Fredrich. Hans Peter Richter

Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1970). ISBN 0-14-032205-1. 149 pp.

Set in Germany from the early 1930's through 1942, this tale starkly relates the fate of German Jews through the chronicle of a friendship between a Protestant boy and his Jewish friend. As pressures of conformity in Germany mount, one boy's father joins the Nazi party, the other boy's family is destroyed. The thrust of the book is how hard it is to stand by your principles, and how ruinous it is when you don't. A powerful book.

- What pressures acted on Fredrich and his friend? What choices did they have?
- What are the similarities and differences between this story and the one told about the Danish people in *Number the Stars*?
- What would you have done in this situation?

The Story of Ferdinand. Munro Leaf

Puffin Books (1936). ISBN 0-1 4-050234-3 Simple picture book, 68 pp.

Another classic picture book that has stood the test of time. Ferdinand is a bull unlike any other. Instead of spending his time honing his fighting skills by rough-housing with his brothers, Ferdinand sits under his favorite cork tree and smells the flowers. When by fluke he is chosen to fight in the most famous bull ring in Spain, Ferdinand stays true to his character. This book has always served as an allegory for the virtues of non-macho behavior, and it continues to do so today.

- Why do you think Ferdinand felt the way he did? What do you think the other bulls thought of him?
- What is the author's point of view about Ferdinand's actions? Do you agree with him?
- Does this book, written in 1936, have any meaning for us today?

Out of Control. Norma Fox Mazer
Avon Flare (1993). ISBN 0-380-71347-0. 218 pp.

This Newbery Honor book author has written an insightful story about sexual harassment of teenage girls by their male classmates. Three junior "big men on campus," facing their own insecurities and peer interactions, have formed a strong bond. When they cannot intimidate one of the girls in their class, they stalk, restrain, and fondle her in a brief show of force. The author follows the consequences for the girl, and for one of the boys in a complex and enlightening manner. She shows how this incident is the tip of an iceberg and how boys, as well as girls, are victims of the way women are perceived in society. This book is for older students (7-8 grade) because of occasional profanity and sexual references, though the author uses this language sparingly and realistically.

- What were the causes of violence in this story?
- What could have been done to prevent this kind of harassment from happening?
- Is this kind of situation found in your community? What do you think should be done about it?

Don't Hurt Laurie! Willo Davis Roberts
Aladdin (1977). ISBN 0-689-71206-5. 166 pp.

Laurie is beaten by her mother, regularly, unexpectedly, and with increasing severity. Whenever people at Laurie's middle school, neighborhood, or local hospital begin to show suspicion about her injuries, the family moves. Finally, when she becomes fearful for her life, Laurie reaches out for help. Both she and her mother find the support they need to avoid tragedy.

- How could Laurie have gotten help sooner? How could the people she had contact with have been more alert to her situation?
- This book was written in 1977. Have things changed for abused children since then? What help would be available to Laurie today?
- What other kinds of violence takes place within families? What can be done to help prevent this kind of violence?

The Great Brain Reforms. John Fitzgerald
Dial (1973). ISBN 0-440-44841-7. 165pp.

In a small Utah town, a young "con artist" swindles his peers out of everything they hold dear. When he goes too far and endangers life itself, the children find a unique way to resolve the conflict. They hold a surprise mock trial in which he is charged with lack of responsibility, placing money before life, and thievery. All the characters have charm and without resorting to vigilantism they get the "defendant" to understand the depth of feeling against him.

- How did the children in this story resolve the conflict between them?
- How are conflicts between individuals or groups solved in the adult community? Among children in your community?
- What do you think of this method? How would it work in your community?

Shiver, Gobble and Snore. Marie Winn
Simon and Shuster (1972). Out of print. Check library for availability.

The major reason for the existence of rules and law in society is to provide a means for people to live together in a safe and just manner. Rules and laws can help deal with conflicting interests, and provide procedures for peaceful conflict resolution. This book provides a clear and delightful way of introducing this concept. The three characters named in the title leave their own tyrant-led country for a land where there are no laws. And then they discover why laws are needed.

This story also can be found in a "Readers Theater" format in **Acting Together, Excerpts from Children's Literature on Themes from the Constitution**, by Arlene Gallagher, Editor, Social Science Education Consortium, Inc. (1991) ISBN 0-89994-363-2. Other stories in this collection that can be used to discuss conflict resolution and violence include "The King, the Mice and the Men," by Eric Gurney, "Sunshine Valley," by Paul Gallagher and Barbara Naugler and "Nettie's Trip South," by Ann Turner.

- What conflicts developed once the three characters moved to a new place? Why?
- What were some things that could have been done to help avoid the conflicts or to settle them?
- How are conflicts prevented or handled in your family? school? community? the nation?

The Big Orange Splot. Manus Pinkwater
Hastings House (1977). ISBN 0-590-4451 0-3. Picture book, 32pp.

On a street where all the houses look alike, one person paints his home to reflect his fantasies, interests and creativity. At first his neighbors rebel at this unexpected nonconformity, and send representatives to convince him to return to "normalcy." In the story, it is the neighbors who get carried away by the man's vision. But the story also provides an opportunity to look at various ways the conflict could be managed. For example, the class could hold a neighborhood meeting or an arbitration or mediation session; the "neighbors" could ask their city government to pass an ordinance, the class could conduct a mock trial in which the neighbor is sued in court. This lovely, simple tale could provide a number of experiences that enhance student's citizenship knowledge and skills.

- ➤ What are the different points of view that are in conflict in this story?
- ➤ What are some possible ways of settling the conflict peacefully?
- ➤ Which of these ways involve a form of government? Which are available in your community?
- ➤ Which form of conflict resolution do you think would be most effective in this situation? Why?

The Sneetches and Other Stories. Dr. Seuss
Random House (1961). ISBN 0-394-80089-3. Picture book, 32 pp.

The Sneetches live on beaches in relative harmony until a little man with a big machine arrives on the scene. For a nominal fee he imprints a star on the bellies of select Sneetches and they become the elite—until everyone gets a star. Then the little man offers to remove the stars—for a fee. And so it goes, back and forth—until the Sneetches realize they have been "taken." The story illustrates how superficial differences between people can be seen as indicators of superiority and how such beliefs lead to conflict.

The accompanying story of the Zax shows how the inability to compromise can lead to stalemate and to being shut out of progress in a changing world. The usual Seuss wit makes the points humorously, yet clearly. Students can be asked to write a Seuss-like story about conflict.

- ➤ What are Dr. Seuss's messages in these two stories? How are they similar? How are they different? What do they have to do with conflict and violence?
- ➤ What solutions does Dr. Seuss present? Do you agree with them?

Death of the Iron Horse. Paul Goble
Aladdin Books (1987) ISBN 0-689-71 686-9. Advanced picture book, 56 pp.

In August 1867, an "Iron Horse" was derailed by Native Americans—the only time in history such an event happened. This is the true story of that act, characterized by the author as "a tale of courage and pride and of a people caught up in an unequal struggle to preserve a sacred way of life." Similar to "sabotage," when European craftsmen threw their wooden shoes into machinery at the dawn of the industrial age, both acts were seen as necessary to stop harmful technological development. A useful book in discussing how one should deal with unwanted change or invasion by others.

- What different points of view about the causes of this conflict are presented in this story?
- What are some other examples of such conflict today or in the past?
- How can different groups of people resolve disputes over territory without resorting to violence?

Talking Peace, A Vision for the Next Generation. Jimmy Carter
Puffin Books (1993, 1995) ISBN 0-1 4-037440-X. 198 pp.

"...conflict occurs when interests differ.... The peacemaker's job is to settle differences through compromise and negotiation before they erupt into violence." And it is the role of peacemaker that former President Carter has undertaken. In this comprehensive book, Carter covers his activities in this role, and what led him to his commitment. He gives an historical and contemporary overview of war, and talks about the role that food, shelter, and health care play in building the foundations of peace. He examines the role environmental and human rights issues play in human conflict. He looks at peace-making methodologies such as mediation and democratic elections. He speaks of our cities "at war" and the need to seek peace in America. He highlights the status of young people around the world and what they can do around each of the issues discussed in his book. While this is not fiction, the book has a warm, personal touch that makes complex issues more accessible. It is a most helpful resource.

- What kinds of conflict does former President Carter see in the world?
- What are some of the causes of conflict he identifies?
- What solutions does he present? Do you agree or disagree with them? Why?
- If you were writing a letter to President Carter about his book, what would you say to him?

The final two books are not "literature." They are examples of useful resources that are available to help organize students' discussions and problem-solving activities. They can be used to help them learn how to take control of their own problems and participate in finding solutions.

Violence in the Schools: Developing Prevention Plans
Exercises in Participation Series student book and teacher's guide.
Center for Civic Education (1994). ISBN 0-89818-175-5. 90 pp.

Violence in the Schools: Developing Prevention Plans is the most recent title in the Exercises in Participation Series. Students examine the problem of violence in a hypothetical middle school, in their communities, and in the nation and develop a prevention plan. Divided into nine lessons.

A review by Alan Markwood in the *Fourth R* stated, "I found the [Violence in the Schools] curriculum to be particularly stimulating for a number of reasons. One is its emphasis on citizens' groups as civic conflict managers. Another is its strong challenge to students to engage in the process of evaluating public policy.... Students who take full advantage of the curriculum will probably end up being more well-informed about violence prevention and conflict resolution than most adults."

A Kid's Guide to How to Stop the Violence. Ruth Harris Terrell
Avon Books (1992) ISBN 0-380-76652-3. 134 pp.

This book speaks directly to students, anticipating their concerns and providing examples of some solutions that have worked. It states "From writing a letter, to calling a hotline, to changing your own behavior, you can help stop violence in your own life and in the lives of others." It might not be that simple, but it can surely point the way.